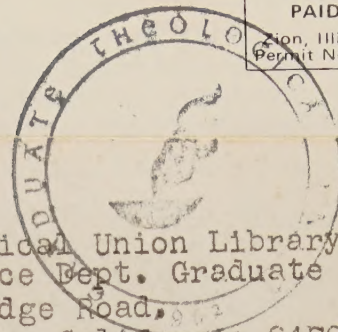
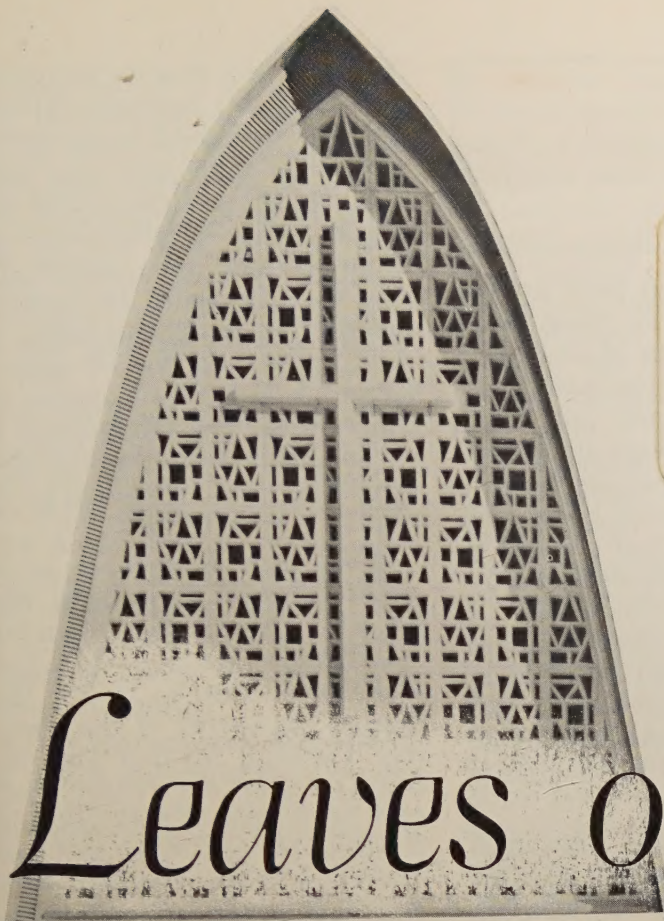


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Leaves of Healing

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WATCHWORD FOR 1975

*"YE SHALL BE
WITNESSES
UNTO ME"*

ACTS 1:8

Only Trust Him

Carl Q. Lee

On our late General Overseer Mintern's desk there was a little plaque bearing this motto, *Prayer Changes Things*. I have inherited that plaque and it hangs on the wall of my office where I can see it each day. Through the passage of time, I can with Overseer Mintern testify to the fact that prayer does indeed change things. I am sure that every one of you could make a similar testimony. You have prayed and something has happened. Perhaps the answer has not always been as we have prayed; we have asked for something that was not within the will of God, or God has resolved our petition differently from what we anticipated. Nonetheless, the fact remains that through the power of prayer things have been changed, things have been different.

Prayer can be abused. Mark Twain tells in his own inimitable way of the deacon who, one night as he meditated about his business, not the Lord's business, was suddenly confronted with the recording angel. Needless to say he was startled, he was perplexed, and he asked the recording angel, "What do you want?" The recording angel is reported by Mark Twain to have said, "We are a little bit confused in heaven about your prayers my good deacon. We find that your public prayers are cancelling out your private prayers. And we decided to come down and find out which prayer you really meant." We can see that prayer *can* be abused.

God communicated with man as friend-to-friend in the Garden of Eden. Then there came the spectre of sin and that communication was broken. Men since then have had to seek God as they have been led by their hearts. Sinful hearts have prayed, yes, they have prayed in many ways. Men have created

their own gods and have prayed to them. Sometimes those gods were ugly imitations of their own inmost persons; people worshipped them, prayed to them and sacrificed to them. There are others who have found that they have satisfied in some minuscule degree the need to pray with their trusting in "lady luck" or whatever you may choose to call it. They carry a rabbit's foot and their form of prayer is to rub that foot hoping it will bring them good luck. But God has ordained that man should come to Him, and communicate with Him in prayer.

Down through the ages men have communicated with the One True and Living God. And through that communication there has been clear evidence of the dynamic power that emanates out of prayer. We can see example after example of this all down through the Old Testament. The 11th chapter of Hebrews reveals this to us, and talks about men of faith and how they prayed—Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Noah, you can go down the list. These saints communicating with God were moved by Him and things changed. There was power that emanated from God through them as a result of their prayers.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave great teaching on prayer, teaching that resolves itself into one brief statement, *Men ought always to pray and not to faint*. Of course by this we mean men, women, and children should be persistent in prayer, and as they are persistent power becomes evident and things change.

Let us talk about two aspects of how prayer does change things, and how its power works within us. When we approach God's throne of grace and mercy and say, *Our Father Who art in heaven*—perhaps our whole image of God needs to be improved. I have asked people,

"What do you imagine as you say, 'O God!' or 'My heavenly Father'?" And I have received many answers, some that were very very good. But it seems so strange that after the simplicity of what Jesus said about Himself men should find God to be someone far removed, judgmental, unapproachable, observed and thought of only in terms of His Omnipotence and Glory, when the relationship between God and the one who prays should be deeply personal as one talking with a friend.

What does Jesus have to say about Himself? That night when He was in the Upper Room with His disciples talking with them and endeavoring to fortify them against the events of the coming day, He said, *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Philip said, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father . . . the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me.*

If we would know and understand God, the One to Whom we pray, The One to Whom we direct our prayers, we should come to the profoundest understanding we possibly can of this One Jesus of Nazareth, Who is God manifested in the flesh.

What do we find in Jesus of Nazareth? First of all we find a dynamic concern for others that prompts Him to move up and down and across the little land of Palestine, touching blind eyes to make them see, touching dumb tongues that they might sing the praise of God, touching withered hands and crippled legs that they might be useful again; speaking to the elements, *Peace be still!* and the raging wind becomes a calm. We see selfless compassion expressed. For instance, when the rich young ruler came to Jesus to ask Him, "What must I do to be saved?" Jesus looked upon him

and loved him. And this is true of Jesus' communication with all of those to whom He ministered. He looked upon them and He loved them. Throughout His entire ministry we find this concern, this selfless compassion, this complete willingness to self-sacrificial service that took Him eventually to the cross.

How many of us think in terms of Jesus Christ being God manifested in the flesh? Oh yes, we think of the gentle Jesus; we think of His kindness, His concern and compassion. Do we realize, beloved, we are seeing the One True and Living God Who manifested Himself to us in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth?

We see also in Jesus that side of God which is judgmental. We see Him entering the Temple courts, and there observing His Father's House, which had been called of all nations the house of prayer turned to a den of thieves. He found the Temple traders violating their ethical trust by charging for faulty sacrifices and cheating the pilgrims who had come from far away places to worship in the Temple, by giving them a false exchange for the money of their realm to the Temple shekel. As they heard His words, *Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves*, they trembled because they were hearing the voice of God, through His Son. They fled the place overturning their own money tables and dove cotes in their panic to get away from the judgment of Almighty God. Yes, but it was a judgment rooted in love, because those who had warranted and guaranteed the use of the Temple for these purposes, one day stood at the foot of the cross and looked upon the Son of God as He hung there bleeding, and heard the words, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!* So the compassion, the concern, the selflessness continues even as He breathes His last.

This is the God to Whom we pray. This is Almighty God Whom

we address when we say, *Our Father Who art in heaven*. Consequently it is when we come to Him and know Him as we know Jesus of Nazareth, the power that goes to work within us is that power which resolves our guilt in terms of the sacrifice that He made for us—God for Christ's sake has forgiven our sins. We find that the hates and animosities we foster are suddenly driven out by the perfect love evidenced in Jesus Christ, because perfect love casts out fear, hate, anxiety.

As we view the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, and know that this is God, we come to understand the rootage of what Paul said, *...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose*. We realize, at least in a measure, what it means when He said, *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ concerning you*. Knowing Him to Whom we pray, knowing Him in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, there comes to us that infinite peace of God that passeth all understanding. When that peace pervades our life things change. The tensions that come out of our hatred, our guilt, our anxieties and self-centeredness, they destroy us. But when they are resolved in the presence of Jesus of Nazareth, Who is God manifested in the flesh, our lives change—indeed prayer changes things. The very peace of God within us makes these hands do differently; puts our feet in a different pathway; creates a new relationship with loved ones, with those with whom we work, with the stranger we meet.

There is a second way in which prayer changes things. God created this universe. When He did it is relatively unimportant. How He did it is relatively unimportant. But it is important that we remember that He did it. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep*. Out of that darkness and chaos

God brought into existence this universe as we know it today. As to its extent man is but merely beginning to scratch the surface, and that which he discerns of space becomes unbelievable in its dimension. The stars that are set in motion, the galaxies that move throughout the heavenly space are beyond our comprehension. God instituted the laws by which they function and move, and how orderly they move. Oh we violate them every day; we pollute this world we live in, and we pollute our own lives. Nonetheless, the laws by which this world is governed were ordained of God in the beginning, and they function and work to this day, but as they are violated their violations exact their terrible penalty.

What I am trying to convey about the laws of God is this: there comes a time when the prayer of faith reaching the throne of God cries out for something to happen, and God can cause the laws He ordained to function in given ways. I believe that God in His Omniscience can abrogate those laws as He sees fit to bring about His will and His purpose. So as the saint prays within the will of God the miracle happens.

There are probably many reading these words who could testify to the working of a miracle in their lives, maybe a miracle of healing or some miracle that involves active forces. I remember talking with a saint of God who was terminally ill. He was fearful of obeying God in baptism. He knew that if he entered the baptismal waters he would faint. At last God spoke to him in such a way that he could not but obey, and he entered the baptismal pool. The one who was doing the baptizing was at the far side of the pool from where he was standing. He related that as the baptismal waters crept up he saw the lights go dim and he knew that he was going to faint. Then suddenly God's servant was beside him his hands on his head. The prayer for deliverance was uttered and the baptism performed. Right then the healing

occurred. This man was an old man when he told me this story, but his eyes still gleamed with the glory of what had happened in his life. A miracle of God had occurred and he had been healed!

We can go back to the days when we owned our radio station in Zion. There was a family in Upper Michigan who were facing a situation in which they were in grave danger. All about them a forest fire was raging. Over their radio set they heard the strains of "God will take care of you." And the miracle happened. The wind changed, the rains came and the fires were extinguished.

Then there is the continuing miracle that happens in the heart when a person, by faith, accepts the grace of God expressed to him through Jesus Christ. In repentance he falls down before God accepting that which was done for him at Calvary and the open tomb, and a new creature in Christ is born, a twice born person. You have seen this miracle happen, I have seen it happen, it happened in my own life. Yes, God can abrogate His laws, He can use them to bring about the miracle. Prayer changes things, and there is power in prayer!

One final thing I would mention. Jesus said, *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name that will I do.* To many this has become a sort of formula. They pray any kind of a prayer and feel perfectly satisfied as long as they say, "We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." That is not what Jesus meant when He said, "If ye ask the Father anything in My name that will I do." Implicit in that instruction is that what you pray for, must be within the compass and scope of His will. If a person prays that his enemy be harmed and God's vengeance be heaped upon him, and he prays that in the name of Jesus Christ, I am afraid the formula will not work because that prayer is not being offered within the will of God, or within the will of Jesus Christ. *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to*

them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you.

I wonder if any of us has that kind of an enemy? I wonder if any of us has that kind of relationship of animosity and hatred with somebody else? How do we pray for that person? I believe if we pray within the will of God we will pray for God's forgiveness for ourselves first of all because we may have caused this person to act the way he has. We pray not for vengeance, we pray not that our animus might be worked upon the one who has offended us. No, we should pray God's will be done between the two parties and that they shall come together in Christian relationship again.

Everyone of us has encountered that within himself which was contrary to the will of God. God have mercy on us we are sinners! But if we seek a profounder understanding of the life of Him Who is God manifested in the flesh, we will come to know God more fully. As we pray to Him we will come to know Him as the One Who

speaks to us and brings the peace that passeth all understanding. The inner conflicts of guilt, hate, fear, anxiety and selfishness are dissolved in His presence, and there is Spiritual healing. Then as we pray for the needed miracle, and it is in accordance with God's will, God will answer prayer even if it means using the laws He has ordained in a special way, or the abrogation of those laws to bring about the miracle.

There is power in prayer to bring peace to the individual—peace that passeth all understanding. There is power in prayer to bring the miracle to pass. Prayer changes things!

Men ought always to pray and not to faint.

Pray without ceasing.

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

A praying people who clearly know the power of God in prayer will quickly learn that indeed prayer changes things!

The Lord Is Risen Indeed

Carl Q. Lee

The Christian faith fundamentally hinges on two things—the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is clearly enunciated in the Scriptures. Both of these events are attested to by many witnesses, although we should be careful how we say this. We know His crucifixion was witnessed by many who loved Him; some were near the cross and some stood afar off. There was also a large company of those who hated Him, and who gloried in His agony and in His death. There is ample proof through Hebrew and Roman records, testifying to the death of Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified with two thieves outside of the city of Jerusalem.

The resurrection presents something different. Actually the resurrection itself was not witnessed.

The women came to the tomb that glorious morning as it began to dawn, toward the first day of the week. They found the tomb open and empty, the graveclothes neatly folded. The beloved Lord and Master was not there.

We, of course, remember the events that are subsequently described; the encounter that Mary Magdalene had with Him; the experience of the disciples as they walked to Emmaus with the stranger who joined Himself to them. And in I Corinthians 15 it tells of those who saw Him, on one occasion upward of five hundred persons at once, after His resurrection. Then Paul says, "Yes, even I as one born out of due time saw Him, the resurrected Lord."

The resurrection was not wit-

nished, but the resurrected Lord was seen, touched and talked to by those who were the witnesses after His resurrection.

I would like for us to take a brief look at the cross. There are just seven recorded phrases Jesus uttered as He hung there upon the cross. *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* I think here is a clue to something Jesus may have done as He hung upon the cross. As any good Jew would do under the duress of great distress He turned to the Psalms for comfort. In those days Scriptures were scarce, and consequently were memorized, so it is that He probably recited the 22nd Psalm. As Jesus hung upon the cross He cried out in the words of the Twenty-second Psalm, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? They pierced My hands and My feet. They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture. They stand round about Me, and gape upon Me like bulls of Bashan." Yes, He recited the Twenty-second Psalm and as He did He would have remembered those closing verses where once again faith triumphs over rejection, over pain, over the agony which men inflict upon other men:

My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear Him.

The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek Him: your heart shall live for ever.

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee.

For the kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the governor among the nations.

All they that be fat upon the earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him: and none can keep alive his own soul.

A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for

a generation.

They shall come, and declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this.

(Psalm 22:25-31).

So it was that Jesus in His agony of pain and rejection, suffered also seeming separation from God. Jesus knew the total agony of physical pain, of rejection by His fellowmen, of betrayal, yes, and of separation from God. No wonder He cried out in terms of the Psalm, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

But faith was there, faith built by the Word of God. As He ran through the psalm in His heart, and as it was uttered by His lips, He knew that God would sustain Him, would strengthen Him regardless of what came to pass. And when the ultimate moment came He could say, *It is finished!* A task that had been assigned, by faith had been completed, and He could then voluntarily yield up His Spirit. "Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit". Once again we see the power of faith being built by the Word of God. The written Word in this case coming together with the Word of God Incarnate in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. The sustaining grace of that faith saw Him through the very portals of death.

Then we come to the resurrection on that first day of the week when His followers came to do those things that love dictated. They wished to anoint His body, to drape it in linen for the burial. He had been laid in the tomb hastily; the tomb had been sealed. They wondered how they would be able to do these things, and they found the tomb open and empty. Mary Magdalene thought the gardener had moved Him away, or perhaps enemies had broken open the tomb and carried Him off so that He would not become an object of worship, or the tomb become a shrine. The soldiers who had witnessed the earthquake, and had seen the stone rolled away had been bribed to lie, and the lie is still heard. But then His follow-

ers see the Risen Lord and they know Him Who was their friend. They know Him Whom they deemed to be the very Christ of God.

When they saw their Lord, their Friend, the One Who had opened blind eyes, touched withered hands to make them whole, raised the dead; had talked with them and taught them, and had been their Lord and Master, there was that joy, "He is alive! He is alive! He is not dead, He is alive!" This was the triumphant joy that was in their hearts at that moment. True, they came to the realization that their Lord had risen from the dead, but I do not believe that all of the meaning of the resurrection was understood immediately.

The implications of the resurrection began to be revealed as those who witnessed and talked with Him after His resurrection told the story to others. He commanded them, "Go, and tell others!" One had said, "Christ is risen!" and those who had seen Him and talked with Him said, "Yes, He is risen indeed!" And so they began to witness to His resurrection.

Out of that came the writings of Paul the apostle, Paul, deeply immersed in the law, deeply resentful of those who claimed that this lowly carpenter from Galilee was indeed Christ the Messiah. He felt it was blasphemy; he felt the law was degraded, the prophets were degraded by these assertions. So he persecuted the church even unto the martyrdom of Stephen.

Then came that fateful day on the road to Damascus when the risen Lord spoke to him. "Saul, it is hard for you to kick against the pricks, isn't it? Why persecutest thou Me?" And here is something that has touched my heart, and I trust it touches yours, that Jesus of Nazareth, Who is indeed Jesus Christ and Lord, identifies Himself with those who are His Church. "Why persecutest thou Me?" said the risen Lord. And so He reveals Himself to Saul of Tarsus, who becomes Paul the apostle. Paul it is who brings to us the deep truths

of what the resurrection means.

I wish I had the words that would adequately reveal the depth, the fullness of the resurrection. You and I are sinners saved by the grace of God. We are under the sentence and penalty of death. It is appointed unto us once to die, and we all know what death is, we have all encountered it one way or another. But the implication of the resurrection is this, death has no final or ultimate claim.

How many ways, how many times can we say this so that we come to understand and know that death, the worst of all of our enemies, has no final nor ultimate claim? Yes, we lay loved ones to rest, and it is a lonely thing. But we know that within the heart of every saint of God there is that triumphant assurance that death has no final or ultimate claim. When Jesus arose from the dead and revealed Himself to His disciples in His resurrected form, He brought to them that consummate assurance that death was a conquered enemy. If we read I Corinthians chapter 15, here is where Paul delineates it, brings it to our attention – the last enemy to be destroyed is death! Death, however you define it, will be destroyed by the risen Jesus of Nazareth, Who is indeed the Lord and Christ. This is what Easter means. This is what we are trying to open our hearts to receive. There is not one of us that loves death, we dread it, we fear it, we hate it, it is appointed unto all of us. But thanks be to God, Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, He is risen indeed, and stands victorious and triumphant over death, and in His victory there is victory for us.

What was it that caused Him to face death upon the cross, and suffer the agony of pain, of rejection, of separation from God? It was the Word of God speaking in His heart. The Word of God speaking to the *Word Incarnate*; it told Him that God would sustain, strengthen and bless Him through every trial, every suffering, every denial, every rejection, through all

of the suffering and pain that is portrayed for us in the Twenty-second Psalm.

The Word of God still speaks to us today – the Word of God as we have it in the Scriptures, and the Word of God in the form of the Resurrected Jesus of Nazareth proclaiming to our hearts that death is defeated. It is this that strengthens and moves our hearts to faith. Christ is risen indeed! We witness to it.

Those who saw the events became witnesses and they said, "We saw it. We saw Him die. We talked to Him after He was risen from the dead. This is the Savior and Lord. Accept Him as Savior and Lord." And in that moment when faith worked and reached out to accept the fact that Jesus of Nazareth had died for one's sins, and risen for one's justification a transformation occurred. Oh yes, it has been called many things by many people but none have equalled the simplicity of the words – the *New Birth*. By faith they have come to accept these two great facts – the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and become born again men, born again women and children, who know beyond any question or cavil of doubt that death has no final claims.

Down through forty years of my ministry I have laid to rest many of our fellowship, the loved ones of those of you reading these words. We have shed tears together, and we will shed tears again. But today and through eternity I can proclaim, and pray God you will be able to proclaim it too that death has no final claim. Just as surely as Christ rose from the dead

so surely do we stand victorious over death and the grave. Yes, sin takes its ugly toll, and the law exacts its penalty. But thanks be to God Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! He is risen indeed!

How can we say it? How can we further emphasize this wonderful truth – He is risen indeed? Let it ring in your hearts and let every implication of that resurrection take rootage and grow to let you know beyond any doubt, that death is a defeated enemy. There will come that day when the graves will be opened. There *will* be a day of resurrection. There *will* be an assemblage before the throne of God's grace and mercy, and then indeed we will know with all of the Biblical connotation of that word that Christ indeed rose from the dead, That He is risen indeed! Pray God that faith may take rootage now and grow by grace to sustain and strengthen us for whatever lies ahead.

We do not know what tomorrow may bring. I don't know what the next half hour will bring, no one does. But this I know that Christ died for my sins. This I know that He rose from the dead for my justification. This I know that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ there is total victory, without equivocation, over death and the grave. *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray God that the refrain will ever ring in your heart, He is risen indeed!*

The Basis of Fellowship in the Christian Catholic Church

Earl L. Minton

PART 3

That such persons must also be

*able to make a good profession,
and declare that they do know, in*

their own hearts, that they have truly repented, and are truly trusting Christ, and have the witness, in a measure, of the Holy Spirit.

To understand better the importance of such a requirement for fellowship in a church, it will be helpful to know just what takes place when a person does repent of his sins and trusts Christ for salvation. First of all, he is declared to be justified. To be justified is to be declared righteous by God, the Righteous Judge. God can do this because we trust in Christ Who bore our sin and became our righteousness (Romans 3:24; I Corinthians 1:30). God justifies the ungodly who believe in His Son (Romans 4:5). This means that our sins are forgiven and we have been accorded a position before God whereby we stand clothed in the righteousness of Christ (Isaiah 61:10; II Corinthians 5:21). At the same time we are adopted into the family of God (Romans 8:15-17), and baptized by His Spirit into the body of Christ, the Church universal (I Corinthians 12:13). These are unseen realities and have to do with our legal standing with God which are unchangeable.

There is also something that happens in the life of a believer. When a person repents and believes on Christ, his personality is invaded by the Holy Spirit. He or she is said to be *born again* (John 3:12, 13; 3:3-7). We are partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4), so that the Christian has two natures, that is, his own sinful nature which remains until the process of redemption is complete and God's nature, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is the new creation spoken of in II Corinthians 5:17: "That if anyone be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." It is this new nature, the presence of God in the life that makes possible a life that is godly and loving.

Because of the weakness of human nature and its tendency to sin, doubt of salvation sometimes

arises in the heart. But since salvation is God's work through the death of Christ for our sin, coming to us as a gift in answer to our faith, God has given very definite assurance. In fact, there are three ways a person may know that he has eternal life: (1) The testimony of the Word of God; (2) The inward witness of the Holy Spirit; (3) The change that has been experienced in the life.

The Apostle John says in his first epistle:

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life... (I John 5:12,13a).

Our faith must be based on fact, not feeling. If we know that we have repented of our sins and have committed our lives to Christ (for that is what believing really is), we have the assurance from God, Who cannot lie, that we have eternal life.

The assurance from God's Word is strengthened by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself . . . (I John 5:10).* The Apostle Paul also bears witness to this fact in his Roman epistle:

It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ . . . (Romans 8:16, 17a R.S.V.).

There are times, however, when a person may not *feel* the presence or witness of the Spirit in his life. Sin, or a mood of depression, or even physical tiredness may hinder our experiencing that inward witness. Generally, the inward witness of the Spirit is in answer to faith, and to open confession of Christ. That is why we must depend on

the fact of God's Word and not on feeling.

Finally, there is the assurance that comes from the change that is experienced in the attitudes and patterns of life as a result of God's working in the heart. The Apostle Paul's way of coming to Christ may be unique, but the result of God's working in the heart is not unique. In some measure, every person who receives Christ as Savior finds that "all things become new." Our eyes are opened to see God, ourselves, sin, and the cross of Christ in a new way. There is a new way of looking at life. God now becomes central in our lives instead of self, and His plan and purpose become our goal rather than our plans and desires. We discover also a new way of looking at others, as we see them through God's eyes of love. There is also a joy and peace in the heart which is new in the knowledge of sins forgiven, and through God's abiding presence. Of course, the old nature is also there and often there is an inner conflict between the old and the new natures, but this very conflict is an evidence of God's presence and working in the life.

A new Christian is likened in Scripture to a newborn baby -- with great potential, but with a lot of growing and developing before that potential can be realized. The church exists to help that new Christian mature in Christ. That is why spiritual maturity is not made a requirement for fellowship. However, because the church is a redemptive fellowship its effectiveness as a witness in the community is dependent upon its membership. Therefore, it is vital that each person entering into that fellowship be able to make "a good profession." Superficial membership is both detrimental to the effectiveness of its witness as well as the person who so joins for the false security it may give him.

It is highly possible for a person growing up in a Christian environment to desire church membership as a "good thing" without under-

standing the necessity of a personal commitment to Christ. Membership in the church fellowship may also be desired for reasons of friendship, respect, or even for social advantage with little comprehension of discipleship and the cross. A pastor may also find it natural to assume that those attending church and sitting under the sound of the Gospel have made that commitment, and that the desire for fellowship is an indication of that commitment. Children of believing member families may be easily influenced by parents, teachers, or friends to be baptized and join the church at a young age before understanding what it is to make a good profession.

Christ made it clear that there would be good and evil, wheat and tares in His Kingdom, and that there would be those in the church who would appear as Christians, but be lacking in that vital ingredient of life from above. Yet there is the responsibility upon church leadership to maintain as high a Biblical standard for membership as possible: Membership training classes, or a personal interview with each person desiring to unite with the church, would give opportunity to help clarify the candidate's understanding of salvation and way of spiritual growth. It would also help to prepare him for active participation in the church.

Becoming part of the fellowship of a church is not to be taken lightly. Responsibility for meeting Biblical standards rests both with the leadership of the church and the one desiring to enter. Therefore, we must recognize the necessity of the third article of the Basis of Fellowship: *That such persons must also be able to make a good profession, and declare that they do know, in their own hearts, that they have truly repented, and are truly trusting Christ, and have the witness, in a measure, of the Holy Spirit.*

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR 1975

Michael Ch. Khayat

The Christian year commemorates the New Testament events of salvation and brings before our minds continually the facts of our redemption.

January 1, 1975 – (Wednesday)

New Year's Day.

The Church commemorates the circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ eight days after His birth.

January 6, 1975 – (Monday)

Epiphany, which means manifestation (sometimes called Twelfth Night). The Church commemorates the arrival of the wise men to worship Christ (symbolizing the Gentiles who accept Christ as their Redeemer).

The Sundays that immediately follow belong to the Epiphany season and in them the manifestation of the Gospel is emphasized.

February 12, 1975 – (Wednesday)

Ash Wednesday. Lent begins (40 days, excluding Sundays).

The Church remembers the sufferings of Christ for our sins. Lent is a time of preparation, meditation and repentance. (40 days is the length of time of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness).

March 16, 1975 –

Passion Sunday. Passion Sunday reminds the Church of the death of her Lord foretold by the Prophets and by Jesus Himself.

March 23, 1975 –

Palm Sunday. Commemoration of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem as King.

March 23 – March 29, 1975 –

Holy Week.

March 27, 1975 – (Thursday)

Maundy Thursday. At the close of this day Jesus Christ ate the Last Supper with His disciples, instituting the Holy Communion. We are also reminded of the agony of our Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane.

March 28, 1975 –

Good Friday. The Church on this day remembers scenes of the Crucifixion.

March 30, 1975 –

Easter Sunday. The Church commemorates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The second main Christian festival day. *The Festival of the Son.*

May 8, 1975 – (Thursday)

Ascension Day (always falls on a Thursday). The fortieth day after Easter. The risen Christ returns to the Father.

May 11, 1975 – (Sunday)

Mother's Day.

May 18, 1975 – (Sunday)

Pentecost. Fiftieth day after Easter. The coming of the Holy Spirit to the redeemed body of Christ, the One Universal Church. The third main festival day. *The Festival of the Holy Spirit.*

May 25, 1975 – (Sunday)

Trinity Sunday. Immediately after the birth of the Church and the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Church can now perform her sacraments in the name of the Holy Trinity, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

May 26, 1975 – (Monday)

Memorial Day.

June 15, 1975 – (Sunday)

Father's Day.

July 4, 1975 – (Friday)

Independence Day.

August 31, 1975 – (Sunday)

Festival of Christ the King.

"And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom that which should not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:14).

September 1, 1975 – (Monday)

Labor Day.

September 28, 1975 – (Sunday)

First day of the Seventy-fifth (Jubilee) Annual Convocation, Christian Catholic Church, Zion, Illinois.

October 5, 1975 – (Sunday)

Last Day of the Convocation

October 26, 1975 –

Reformation Sunday.

Protestants remember the beginning of the Reformation, October 31, 1517, and the restoration of the Gospel and spiritual freedom.

November 27, 1975 – (Thursday)

Thanksgiving Day.

November 30, 1975 –

First Sunday in Advent.

Cycle repeats for another Christian year.

November 30, 1975 –

First Sunday in Advent (the beginning of the Christian year).

There are three more Sundays in Advent (December 7, 14, 21).

The days of Advent remind us both of Christ's being born anew in our hearts (as we look for the anniversary of His birth) and of His coming again.

The Church commemorates the first Advent of Christ for Grace and Redemption. The Church anticipates the Second Advent for Glory.

December 24, 1975 to January 6, 1976
Christmastide.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

December 24, 1975 – (Wednesday)

Christmas Eve. Preparation for the commemoration of the birth of our Lord.

December 25, 1975 – (Thursday)

Christmas Day. One of the three main Christian Festival Days.

The Festival of the Father Who gave His only Son.

December 31, 1975 – (Wednesday)

Watchnight for the New Year. God is the Lord of time and of history.